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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (06/18): REACTIONS TO NETANYAHU'S
SPEECH CONTINUE

Main Stories:

Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida lead with wire reports on the joint press conference between Secretary Clinton and Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman (June 17, Washington). Clinton reiterated the importance of halting settlement activities in the Palestinian Territories and supporting efforts to reach a peace settlement between Palestinians and Israel. The wires covered the Secretary's statements concerning the establishment of a Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security. Meanwhile they write that Lieberman rejected the U.S. call for a freeze in settlement activity, stating that Israel cannot accept any such request. Lieberman also stated that the Israeli government must take into consideration natural growth needs, according to reporting.

Al-Quds' leads with continued wire reporting on recent Iranian presidential elections and subsequent protests and violence.

Al-Ayyam and Al-Quds front page coverage of an AFP report that Israel dismantled a checkpoint at the entrance of the West Bank city of Jericho on June 17. The checkpoint was erected in 2006, according to coverage.

All front pages report on the Israeli government's decision on June 17 to release the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council Aziz Dwayk after three years in Israeli prison.

Al-Ayyam's inside coverage included a wire report of President Obama's announcement on June 17 of his planned financial overhaul.

All dailies run inside coverage of a Wafa report about Consul General Waller's meeting with Palestinian Authority President Abbas on June 17 in Ramallah. President Abbas briefed the Consul General on the latest developments in the Palestinian Territories and Middle East peace efforts. Abbas reiterated Palestinian Authority commitment to the two-state solution and to Roadmap obligations.

All front pages run wire reports about Egypt drafting a reconciliation agreement to end Palestinian division. The agreement will be signed on July 7 during a meeting attended by Palestinian groups in Cairo. Senior Fatah leader Abu Najjah noted that the Palestinian Authority (PA) will release a number of Hamas members from PA custody as a gesture of goodwill.

Al-Quds' front page cites Israeli daily Jerusalem Post in reporting that the Israeli organization, "Loyal to the Land of Israel," announced plans to establish 30 new settlement outposts in the Palestinian Territories this summer as a challenge to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's June 14 statements that no new settlements would be established.

All dailies run inside coverage of a June 17 ribbon-cutting ceremony of the USAID funded Criminal Records Office at the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Justice. The event was attended by PA Prime Minister Fayyad and USAID West Bank/Gaza Mission Director Sumka. Sumka described the new facility as, "a positive step" in building PA institutions, according to coverage. For his part, Fayyad confirmed the PA's continuing support to its judicial authority and the independence of the judiciary.

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BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Talal Okal opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title, "Shock and the Reason Behind It" (06/18): "The conditions that Netanyahu presented in his [June 14] speech seek to force every Arab and every Palestinian to submit to all Israeli plans and Israeli interests. Palestinians can understand Netanyahu and his Israeli policy, but they cannot understand the positions of the U.S. and the EU... Obama should quickly take practical and balanced steps if he cares about his country's interests and image."

2) Al Quds independent daily runs an editorial under the title, "Are these positive signs?" (06/18): "Egypt is trying hard to support national Palestinian reconciliation efforts... Hamas' leaders are becoming supportive of any settlement that will end [internal] division. President Obama has also proposed new language and a new beginning. In order for Palestinians to benefit from these positive signs, they must end internal division so that Netanyahu is not given more chances to justify his continued provocative plans."

WALLER